

CITY OF BALTIMORE

MARTIN O'MALLEY, Mayor



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Deaths Due to Drug Intoxication at Lowest Point in Decade

BALTIMORE, MD (June 6, 2006)—According to data from the Office of Chief Medical Examiner for the State of Maryland, deaths of Baltimore city residents from drug intoxication were lower in 2005 than at any point in the last ten years.

Deaths of Baltimore residents due to drug intoxication reached their highest point in 1999, with 328 deaths. Since then, deaths due to illicit substances decreased by 34% to 218 in 2005. During the past year, deaths decreased from 244 in 2004 to 218 in 2005 – a drop of 11%.

Deaths related to opiate use followed a similar pattern, peaking in 1999 at 298 deaths, and falling to their lowest point in a decade in 2005, with 194 deaths. This represents a decrease of 35%, and 104 fewer deaths.

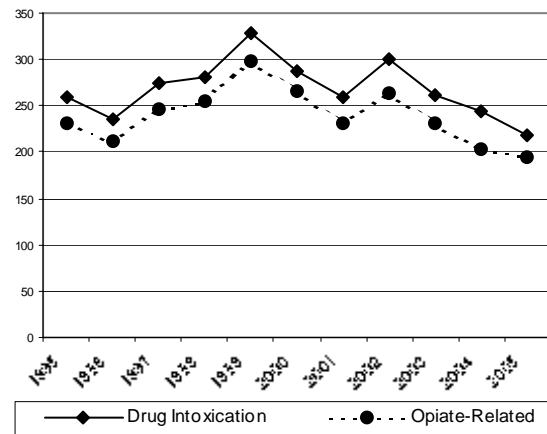
“A decade ago, many people thought it was impossible for Baltimore to make progress in the fight against drug addiction,” said Mayor Martin O’Malley. “Today, the entire nation can see that our investment in drug treatment is paying off.”

“Credit for this accomplishment goes to the thousands of city residents who have rejected a life of drugs to rejoin their communities,” said Adam Brickner, President of Baltimore Substance Abuse Systems, the non-profit agency that oversees the public drug treatment system. “Credit also goes to our city’s dedicated network of substance abuse providers and to everyone who supported expanded access to effective drug treatment over the last decade.”

“These new data show again that drug treatment saves lives,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “This is a solid foundation for further progress against drug abuse in Baltimore.”

The Health Department also released a snapshot on drug treatment in Baltimore, which will be available on the Baltimore City Health Department website. The snapshot describes the methodology of the analysis by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, which excluded death from alcohol intoxication and carbon monoxide. It also presents data on the tripling of drug treatment funding in Baltimore City over the last decade.

**Deaths due to Drug Intoxication Among
Baltimore City Residents, 1995 - 2005**



Source: Office of the Chief Medical Examiner,
Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene